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THEOLOGY

and our Service in the Church

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THEOLOGY

and our Service

in the Church

It is the object of this lecture to introduce something of the theological teaching of Karl Barth. Most probably only a few members of this Synod had an opportunity to read some of his books. Perhaps some of us hear the name of this Swiss Theologian for the first time. This does not matter at all. For, if we try to speak about Karl Barth's Theology, we are not inclined to do so, because we would see in Barth, "the prophet of to-day", as one writes, nor because we believe that "he has saved Protestantism in Germany," as another says. We are also not speaking here as a reporter of a newspaper, who writes about Barth as the originator "of the greatest movement of the century." We

* This essay was read at the first meeting of the Synod of the United Basel Mission Church, held at Mangalore, in 1936.

are speaking about Barth's Theology because we believe that in his work we find, what was not always found since the days of the Reformation namely: *real, legitimate, ecclesiastical Theology*. Therefore, the name, Karl Barth need not receive here special emphasis; the emphasis lies on Theology. The theme of our lecture is therefore :

Theology and our service in the Church.

Let us now, first of all, ask ourselves: What is the origin of Theology? *How does Theology come into existence?*

We answer: 'In the beginning was the word; and the word was God; and the word became flesh.' This is the origin of Theology. What does this mean? It means the wonder of wonders, that God did not keep quiet but spoke unto us by His Son, Jesus Christ. He, the Son, the word of God, is the foundation of the Church. Wherever Christ, the word of God, is heard there man is delivered from his captivity of loneliness and individualism and planted into the Kingdom of his Son. He becomes a member of the body of which Jesus Christ is the head. He becomes a member of the Church. Because there is now the Church,

the body of Christ, the fellowship of those whom God has called out; therefore, there is Theology. *Theology is a function of the Church.*

The word Theology is derived from two Greek words: $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ which means God and $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\epsilon\iota\upsilon$ which means to speak. So, Theology can simply be defined as a speaking of God. Because God did not keep quiet but spoke, therefore, also the Church cannot keep quiet but has to speak. The Church confessing God speaks of God; that means the Church produces *Theology, a human speaking of God, because God has spoken to man.*

Karl Barth would tell us that the Church produces Theology in a threefold way:

1. Because theology is the function of the Church, therefore, Theology is the business or task not only of a special class of people, or let us say the task of some specialists or spiritual aristocrats called evangelists, pastors, or missionaries. Theology, as the function of the Church, is in existence not only because there are a number of selected people who can write after their name a D. D. If in the Church Theology would exist only so far as there are the so-called "Theologians," I think our Church would be in a precarious condition. I

dare say that, for example, my own mother is a better Theologian than many Theologians who have spent a couple of years in the halls of various famous universities, though my mother has seen the university only from outside. Or, it can happen that a so-called "uncivilized" Papua in New Guinea knows better what Christian baptism is than many Western Theologians. What we want to say is this: Theology, a proper speaking of God, can exist in the words and deeds of every ordinary believing individual. Decisive for real Theology is not education and training, but this, that the call of Jesus Christ is heard as the word of God and, therefore, obeyed. Real speaking about the real God can happen only and wherever God has spoken to man. But where God has spoken in Jesus Christ there the Church exists. Therefore, where the Church is, there is Theology.

2. Theology as a function of the Church does exist not only in the life of every believing individual; it exists especially in the activities of the Church as a communion. It exists in its ecclesiastical activities such as, the proclamation of God's word in preaching and administering the sacraments, the adoration of the congre-

gation, the instructions given in Churches and Schools, evangelisation of non-Christians, and all works of charity towards the weak, the sick and the fallen. But now we cannot say that the reality of the Church is identical with all these activities, nor could we be satisfied, if all these activities are found in a Church. Rather, we have to say that all these activities of the Church have to be what we call Theology—a human speaking of God because God has spoken to man. For, it is clear that very often all these activities of the Church can be and are nothing but Humanism, a speaking of man and man's righteousness. But the activities of the Church, if they are the activities of the Church of Christ, are Theology, a speaking of God, because God has spoken to man.

3. Theology as a function of the Church is now existing still in another, and a third form. A Church which is speaking of God because God has spoken to her, knows that she is responsible before God as to *how* she is speaking of God. And she knows more. The real Church knows that she becomes guilty again and again because of her speaking of God. She knows that she is doing her task always in a human, and that means, in a sinful way. The

Church can finally undertake her service only because she believes that God will justify the godless. The Church lives exclusively because of the Grace of God. This includes the readiness of the Church to be criticized. The Church knows that by her own guilt it happens again and again that something other than God's word wants to be heard within the Church. It is for example, always a word of a false God, if one speaks of God, before God has spoken to him. Because the Church herself knows these dangers and temptations lying in her midst, she has taken up the humble but earnest and yet sinful task of self-criticism. This self-criticism is the third and real form of Theology.

Therefore, Theology as science is also a function of the Church. It is the self-criticism of the Church. In this sense, Theology has the task of a watchman who is, every now and then, warning the Church. Are you aware of the responsibility which lies upon you? Do you know what you are going to do if you speak of God? Do you speak of God in the right way? Is your speaking of God making room for the word which God Himself wants to speak to His Church? Are you speaking of

God because God has spoken to you? Or, are you, while speaking of God, only speaking of man with a louder and raised voice? There is no doubt that all these incisive questions and warnings, if they could be uttered with full and real authority, would alter, not only the face but the heart of our Church. There would be authority in these warnings and questions, there would be authority in 'Theology only, if we stand really under the judgment of God, if God is speaking with us. We can only properly speak of the true God, if He has spoken with us. Only, in this way, true Theology comes into existence.

But now we have to ask ourselves another question. If we can only rightly speak of God, if God has spoken to us, how does it come about, that God speaks with us?

Where is God speaking with us?

As a first answer to this question, we can only point to that book which is lying on the reading pulpit, on the altar and on the preaching pulpit in the Church. We can only point to the book of books—the Bible. But can we really point to the Bible because it is the word of God? Is God speaking with us every time we open this book? Do we not all again and

again experience how the Bible is a seven-sealed book? Is it not too often that our Bible-reading leaves us unchanged, so that we are the same hopeless, unhappy, desperate and selfish people after we have read the Bible as we were before? Do we not know that sighing, because we knocked at the door of the Scriptures in vain? Or is not perhaps our joy and enthusiasm after Bible-reading due to a self-deception? That even while reading the Bible, not God, but our beloved 'I' spoke to us? Is it not too often true, that there happened no dialogue between God and man; that man was left alone; that the Bible-reading was a Monologue? And is it not a fact, that man has no means and no methods to make the Bible speak the word of God? The Bible would not be the Bible if it were not so. Just because the Holy Bible is neither a codex of moral principles, nor a compendium or an encyclopedia of theological and philosophical teaching, therefore also in the Bible the word of God is not at our disposal. We cannot open the Bible unless the Bible opens itself. The secret here is the secret of the self-revelation of God in His Word: Jesus Christ. The word of God can only come to us *where and when God reveals His word*

to us. If we are to hear God's word in the Bible, we have to hear really God Himself. That means God must become active and reveal the hidden word, the word hidden in the words of the Bible, the word "which is wrapped up in the swaddling-clothes of the biblical word," as Luther used to say. That God speaks to us in the Bible means always actual self-revelation of God. Therefore in the Bible also the word of God is not at our disposal. We cannot take hold of the word of God, just as we never can take hold of God. But hearing the word of God in the Holy Bible would mean that the word takes hold of us, or better, that God takes hold of us through His word. If we read and hear God's word in the Bible, it can only be a word which God Himself reveals unto us. God's word is always a *revealed word*.

That such self-revelation of God, a real word of God happened and is happening, this is the only foundation and life of the Church. The first thesis of the Bernese Reformation Disputation in the year 1528, very beautifully says: "The Holy Church, of which Jesus Christ is the only head, is *born out of the word of God*; in this word the Church stands

and does not listen to a stranger's voice." With this it is said that the word of God, which is always a revealed word, becomes again and again concrete in the proclamation, in the preaching of the Church. If a Church has to be the Church of Christ, this wonder must happen in her midst. The revealed word must become a *proclaimed word*, proclaimed by a human speaker, but in reality spoken by God Himself. A Church is Christ's Church in the measure in which this wonder happens in her midst. The Church must become the "mouth of Christ," as Luther used to say. It is clear if this wonder happens, then the message of the Church will get a special character. We mention only one characteristic. If the message of the Church is a proclamation of the revealed word of God, that message can neither consist of mere "objective" doctrines, principles and ideas, nor of mere "subjective" convictions, opinions and experiences. If a revealed word is proclaimed, it is never a word produced by the preacher only, but, above all, the word which the preacher is charged with by God Himself: it is a commanded word.

But now, once more, where is the Church receiving this revealed word which should be

proclaimed? In intuition? We say, No! In contemplation? In the depth of the soul? We say, No! In theological, philosophical abstraction and speculation? Once more we have to say, No! If the Church would seek her message there only, she would not hear a revealed and proclaimed word. She would not hear God, but always herself only. Her preaching would not be based on the fact, that God has spoken to her. She would listen to a "stranger's voice" and no more be a Church "born out of the Word of God." The Church cannot dare to preach and proclaim a revealed word, if that word originated within herself. The Church is proclaiming a revealed word only if that word has come to her from without. This "*from without*" means that the revealed and proclaimed word of God is always also a "*written*" word of God. The written word of God tells us, "the word became flesh and dwelt among us!" Only that Church which does not stand over but under the "written word" has found her master. In the written word only, the Church has the authentic *witness* that once a revealed word of God has been proclaimed and in the written word only the church finds the *promise* that God wants

to give his revealed word again through the proclamation of the Church. Still more, the Bible, the written word, is the historical sediment of that Church which really preached the revealed word of God. So that we can say, 'The Church produced the Bible and therefore the Bible produces the Church.' The proclamation of the Church, as any kind of Theology, can therefore only be explanation of the Bible, explanation of the written word. Therefore, the Bible lies in our Church on the reading pulpit, on the altar and on the preaching pulpit. We sum up and say now, 'The word of God is heard in the Bible and in the preaching of the Church, wherever and whenever God gives it, that the written and proclaimed word becomes a revealed word, which means God's own word.

And now we ask a third and last question:

*Has such Theology something to do
with our service in the Church?*

We would not belong to the Church of Reformation, if we should deny it. At the same time I believe that, if only something of this Theology we could understand, a good deal of our thinking would be turned upside

down and a great uncertainty would fall upon us. This would be the first great gift for our Church, if now, at length, we would come into a great uncertainty in view of our service in the Church. But is it right to speak so? Is there not already uncertainty enough in our Church? Is an increase of uncertainty something hopeful? Surely not. We do not wish an increase of that uncertainty which we already have. We wish a new uncertainty! An uncertainty which has its origin only and exclusively in that question: 'Are we speaking of God, because God has spoken to us?' If Theology could ask us this question in such a way, that we could no more ignore it, so that this question would accompany us wherever we are standing in the service of the Church, then Theology would have begun to fulfil her task; Theology cannot give us that word of God. Theology can only tell us and warn us, that if we want to speak of the true God, He must first speak to us.

But who is speaking of God? Who is in the service of the Church? Only Missionaries, Pastors, Evangelists and sometimes Elders? No! Every individual Christian with his whole existence, in words and deeds, stands in

the service of the Church and speaks of God whether he likes it or not. And for this speaking of God, of all the individuals, the Church is responsible. The Church cannot say that she has nothing to do with these individuals, otherwise she would be denying herself, she would be denying that Theology is a function of the Church. If, therefore, a Church would see that in her midst a good many individuals or even the majority would not speak of God in the right way, the Church could not simply go and correct these individuals and deliver to them a sermon of repentance. The Church which would know something of Theology would first hear that question put to herself: Is your speaking of God based on the actual reality that God spoke to you? "The Judgment must begin at the house of God!" It is now the truth, what that first thesis of the Bernes Disputation says, that the Church is born out of the word of God. God is ruling this Church not otherwise than through *His word*. We have to emphasize: through *His word*! "But because God is not dwelling among us in visible presence and is not proclaiming His will through His own mouth, He uses the service of men, installs them as His deputies and vicars, transfers to

them His right and honour—but only so that He might, through their mouth, do His own work, as an artist uses his instruments,” says Calvin, when he speaks in his “*Institutio*” about the office of the servants of the word of God. Hence this great warning—Are you speaking of God because God has spoken to you?—has to be given first of all to us, the Evangelists, Pastors, and Missionaries, who are the servants of the word of God. Unless this question does bring us into great uncertainty before *and after* our sermons, catechisations, and Bible-classes, we are not servants of the word of God. Only if this question is living in us, we hear the warning, that we are not to preach our own opinions, our ideas and views, our experiences, or the experiences of others, which have so often the sign and mark of untruthfulness. We deceive the Church and blaspheme God, if we believe or try to build up the Church with our own word. In our service it depends all upon this, whether we speak of God, because God has spoken to us!

But, fortunately, our Church does not consist of Missionaries, Evangelists and Pastors only. We have a Synod. We have elders. Each elder, even if he is not reading the Scripture-lesson

before the congregation, even if he is not conducting prayers, each one is, with his whole existence and especially with his service which he renders the Church, speaking of God. And he is only a true elder if he knows, better than others, that he can only speak of God, that he can only serve the Church, if God has spoken and is speaking to him. Only then he can admonish his brother as a brother, only then he will be the right man for collecting rents and church-taxes. What else is Church-discipline than a speaking of God together with the erring brother and sister? We are deceiving the Church and blaspheming God, if we are dealing with Church-discipline and God has not first spoken with us. It will be a stinking wound on the body of the Church, if we get elders or use our eldership in order to increase our influence, or the influence of our party. The Church is not a "Democracy" it ought to be a "Theocracy"; that means a communion where God rules and not man. Our service in the Church is only then a real service if we the elders, the evangelists, the pastors and the missionaries have all only one care in our hearts, that God's word becomes that free word, which can only conquer our sin, also

that sin which is the sin of all of us, that we speak of God, though God did not first speak to us. The Church stands and falls with this wonder that man can speak of God because God has spoken to man. This wonder and possibility is Jesus Christ.

The new understanding of the first thesis, that we can only speak of God if God has spoken to us, is a preliminary condition for the understanding of the second thesis: We hear God's word in the Bible and in the preaching of the Church, wherever and whenever God gives it, that the written and proclaimed word becomes a revealed word, which means God's own word. We can only shortly touch the importance of the second thesis.

1. If we, as the servants of the word of God, enter the pulpit or stand before the Confirmation-class with that confidence, feeling that we shall do well this time and, if we then leave the pulpit or the class with a still greater confidence that we have won the battle, we do not know what was expected from us. We might lecture History well and teach Mathematics perfectly; but, to tell the congregation the word of God, really God's word—who can be confident here? Is the word of God at our disposal?

If it is, it is surely not God's word, for God's word, only *God* can speak, only *He* can reveal it. Let us be clear in all the functions of our service, the people expect never a human word. In the house-visits and in the sermons preached in the Church, the congregation unknowingly wants to hear God's word. The congregation gathers in order to hear a revealed word, the congregation expects that the preacher's mouth becomes "Christ's mouth." The congregation is asking for bread—a revealed word of their God. If we give them our own word—we give them stones!

2. Only if we have forgotten that in the Church not the pastor but finally God wants to be heard, can we propose that the Church should for some years stop preaching and only gather for silent prayer and adoration. But we ask, where is more prayer, where is more adoration than where a revealed word of God is proclaimed and listened to?

There are also a lot of Christians, and even servants of the word of God, who confess: "Private Bible-reading benefits me more than ten sermons". This is only a confession that in the sermons no God's word was heard. In most of such cases, it is a suggestion of the devil, of

individualism, who is very strong in the U. B. M. Church. God wants a congregation, a communion, a people and not a private gathering of religious individualists. There is sufficient time for private Bible-reading and private prayer. If the word of God becomes no more a proclaimed word, and does not lead the individual to the communion of those whom God has called out, it is not God's word. We cannot go against the will of God who wants that His revealed word should become a proclaimed word of God for His people.

3. We have to say a last word. A revealed word does not mean a word of intuition or mystic contemplation, a word which we found in the depth of our soul. It means always a written word found in the Bible of Old and New Testaments. A revealed word, if it is God's word, will never go against the Bible—the word found in the Biblical Canon. What is revealed is written and the written word only can become a revealed word. If we would remove the written word and replace it with the so-called "living word of the Church", that means biographies of Saints like Augustine, Luther, Calvin or Sadhu Sunder Singh, we would remove the written and the proclaimed

and the revealed word. We would listen to a stranger's voice and not to the voice of the *good* shepherd. It is simply so, because the Bible as such, against all human and satanic attempts, proves again and again to be the only source of the proclaimed and revealed word of God.

We close here. We do not call Karl Barth a prophet, we don't think that *he* has saved Protestantism, neither do we care whether he is the originator of a great or a small movement. But we believe that his Theology has to tell us many things badly needed for our poor but beloved U. B. M. Church. For, our wish is, that our Church also might be born out of the word of God, be rooted therein and not listen to a stranger's voice.

RECONCILIATION

and

Christian Life

Let me say a word of introduction. The subject we are going to think about is thoroughly a theological subject. Is it then right to read before High School Teachers a theological paper? Is it not asked too much, that a teacher should be an educationalist, a psychologist, a mathematician, a chemist, a physicist etc. etc. and finally also a theologian? Yes indeed, it would be asked too much, if theology would be simply an additional science, let us say science of religion. But theology, though it is a science too, it is it never in the sense of other sciences. Real theology, Christian Theology is therefore never to be mistaken as some sort of theory or speculation, which has more or less no connec-

* This essay was read at a retreat of High School Teachers at Nettur, Malabar, June 1936. .

tion with real life. Theology knows rather that the division between theory and praxis is an invention of Satan. Christian Theology has always been what Paul the Apostle said: "We bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Here is thought and life, theory and praxis undivided, unseparated. And you all will agree that: to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, is not only the task of every so-called Theologian, but of every Christian. Or we can put it otherwise and say: Every real Christian is a Theologian. He is not that free man who can at his own pleasure think in one respect according to Christ, in another according to Mohammed, in a third according to Khrishna. Nobody can serve two masters. A Christian at least has only one Master and that Master wants to rule also the world of thought. If Christ is not our Master in our thoughts He is it also not in our lives. Likewise, if He is not our Master in our lives He is it also not in our thoughts. Thought and life cannot be separated. "He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad", this word stands also for the realm of thought. That's why every Christian teacher is asked to do also in Theology whatever he can. Also he is bound to bring into

captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. This is, it seems to us the justification for reading this theological paper to you.

Our subject is:

Reconciliation and Christian Life.

This theme could be understood in different ways. It depends upon the understanding of the little word "and". Reconciliation *and* Christian Life, what does this "and" denote? From grammar use we know that this conjunction can order things together which usually do not go together, as "God and Sinner." In this phrase the coordinated subjects oppose each other in an absolute sense. This cannot be the significance of the "and" in our theme. We do not like to hear about Reconciliation and Christian Life as the work of two subjects who are at war with each other, though this could be done too, for, is not very often our so-called Christian Life more a fight against, than for, or with God?

The second possibility would be, that the contradiction between the two subjects—the subject that works out reconciliation and the subject that works out Christian life, —were not an absolute but a relative one. We could then perhaps explain the relation between Reconcili-

liation and Christian Life in the term of "Seed and Fruit". We had then to discuss whether reconciliation would be the "seed" producing through a certain process the "fruit" of Christian life, or whether the Christian life would be the "seed" working out the "fruit" of reconciliation. As a matter of fact both the possibilities are found in the teaching of the Christian Church. But we can say so much, that nobody, who has a minimum knowledge of the New-Testament-Theology, would understand reconciliation as the fruit of Christian life. More common is the understanding of Christian life as the fruit of reconciliation. But also this is only possible through a misunderstanding. The misunderstanding is, that it is thought possible, that the subject of Christian life could be a different one from that subject working out reconciliation. It is agreed, that God is the subject of reconciliation, but the subject of Christian life is man. But this aspect is only possible, if either we fall into relativism, where God is no more the Absolute, or we assume that man through reconciliation enters a process of deification.

If now this "and" in our theme: Reconciliation "and" Christian life, denotes neither a coordination of two subjects who are contradic-

ting each other in an absolute sense, as "God and Sinner", nor a coordination of two subjects who contradict each other in a relative sense, as "Seed and Fruit", there is only one possibility left. What is this possibility? The answer to this question is the answer how we understand the "and" in our theme—. We understand that the subject of Reconciliation and the subject of Christian Life is one and the same. That means: *We understand reconciliation and Christian Life as the work of the triune God.* We say: *The Reconciliation is our Christian Life.* The "and" denotes then that one is not existing without the other.

I think it good to make here a short remark, namely, we do not understand the dogma of the Triunity of God as some sort of speculation about the nature of God, but as an explanation, an exegesis, what the New Testament means by revelation. The dogma of the Trinity is not merely a theory, it is of great importance for our Christian Life. Therefore we shall now try to develop the thesis: Reconciliation *and* Christian Life are the works of the triune God. We do this by answering to three questions:

I. What does it mean for our Christian

Life, that the Reconciliation is the Work of God the Father?

II. What does it mean for our Christian Life, that the Reconciliation is the Work of God the Son?

III. What does it mean for our Christian Life, that the Reconciliation is the Work of God the Holy Ghost?

I

*What does it mean for our Christian Life
that the Reconciliation is the work of
God the Father?*

That human life, as we all live it, is in some way in disorder and that this disorder in our life has its reason in a perversion of our relation to God, this is felt and understood not only by Christians, but also by the followers of different religions. What else means religion—and very often also Christian religion—than an earnest, even life-killing endeavour of man to find a way on which, or through which, that last and most dangerous, inner, religious disorder could be eliminated, so that the tired, prodigal son would find again his father's house? So that the disorder would disappear and

human life become again true, human, victorious life?

But the New Testament-Message of Reconciliation wants now to tell us first, that this disorder is deeper than we think. "Reconciliation" says first and last against all existing "ways of salvation", that there is in the whole world no such way, no security, no hope of getting rid of that last and inner disorder in human life. The New Testament says this because it confesses, that *the Reconciliation is the work of God, of God exclusively!* And already the Old Testament witnesses in many ways: None of them can by any means redeem his brother..... it ceaseth for ever! The Bible says even that man does not desire the reconciliation of God: as Paul says: We were reconciled to God, *while we were enemies!* This is the wonder witnessed in the Bible, that God meets man in his enmity against God and conquers that enmity. Further we must bear in mind, that these enemies are not only the religious indifferent people. Paul has experienced, that he was an enemy of God, just when he was fighting most zealously for the glory of God. Luther has made the same experience, that just in our religiousness we are the strongest enemies of God. As the discoverer

of the great old gospel, Luther was also the discoverer of human pride and haughtiness, which finds its climax in the religiousness of man. In the best what man has, he is a rebel against God. "Reconciliation" in the sense of the New Testament means: there is no end of that enmity between man and God *if God Himself* does not make an end to it. Only when we understand that reconciliation is the work of the thrice holy God, making an end to our rebellion against Him, only then we understand also that reconciliation *is* Christian life. Then we may understand why God is not only the subject of reconciliation but of Christian Life too.

"Reconciliation" witnesses further, that God *has* reconciled the world unto Himself. But immediately something more has to be added. God has reconciled the world unto Himself not because He would have been bound to do so. If we have to understand the work of Reconciliation as the work of the triune God, we must know that it is the work of the *free* God, who does not need man in order to have communion with a "Thou". God is the eternal Father, who is the Father of His eternal Son and needs therefore nobody else. God is absolu-

tely free and not bound to us. So Reconciliation, or the fact that God the eternal Father has made an end to the enmity between Him and us, is to be understood as an absolute wonder. The wonder of His Fatherhood, the wonder of His Love. And it has to be understood that our reconciler, that God also as the eternal Father remains the Holy and free God, the Lord, the Kyrios of our life. Inasmuch as He is this free God and this eternal Father in our personal life, we are living a Christian Life. Here only God is the subject of Reconciliation *and* of Christian Life.

From this conclusion is understandable, that in a Christian Life where the triune God is the subject of reconciliation we shall find therefore always a good dose of :

1. Sobriety: What does this mean? It means that a Christian will understand what God is and what he is. He will be cured again and again from all the endeavour to show himself as another than he really is. The cramp of self-sanctification will cease. He knows that there is no experience which could alter, that he would not be, what he is before the eyes of God. And he knows that only that is decisive for his Christian life what he is before God. He will

therefore not trust emotional and the manifold enthusiastic religious experiences. He knows, not my religiousness, but the redemptive work of the triune God is my Christian life. There is nothing in my life that could have the same, or similar importance of that what God has done for me. But all this does never mean that such a Christian is a satisfied man with an unshakable self-confidence. The opposite is the case. And this brings us to the second characteristic of real Christian life which we had to mention here:

2. The life of a Christian will be characterised as the life of a man with an *alarmed conscience*. He will know throughout his life that "fear and trembling" of which Paul speaks and which Luther called the *comforted despair*. A true Christian can despair because the reconciliation wrought by God Himself is his Christian Life.

But wherefrom does such a Christian know that he *is* reconciled to God? Here the New Testament points at one particular place in the history of man; this place is: Jesus Christ. This leads us to the second question:

*What does it mean for our Christian Life
that Reconciliation is the work of
God the Son?*

The New Testament calls Jesus of Nazareth the Kyrios, the Lord. The simple confession of the early Church was: Lord is Jesus; because He is the One through whom we now received Reconciliation. But the New Testament witnesses unmistakably, that He is not this Lord, Kyrios, or the Son of God because He, as man, has worked our Reconciliation. No, because Jesus is the Kyrios, the Lord, the Son of God, because God was in Him, therefore there is Reconciliation. All those stories of those unbelievable wonders and especially the great story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ are nothing but a witness of His Godhead. Jesus had not become divine because of what He has done, but He has done, what He did, because He *is* God, the eternal Son of the eternal Father. The Son is the revelation of God's Fatherhood. *He is* the word which was in the beginning. He is the word who was with God. He is the word who was God. If it is said that through *Him* we received Reconcilia-

tion, it is said that the Father and the Son are one. It is the same subject, God in Christ, that worketh out Reconciliation. He is Immanuel, God with us and He is God "for" us.

"And the word became flesh". By this sentence we are told—what it has cost God to reconcile the world unto Himself. The wonder of Christmas was necessary. And the word: "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" sounds through all the millenniums telling us what pains God has taken to reconcile the world unto Himself. The wonder of the Cross was necessary. And if it is said that Jesus Christ is the Word of God, then "word" means at once word and deed, a word that is what it says. Therefore the whole life of Jesus, His words and deeds, His birth and death are a proclamation of the word of God. That word which is called an "euangelion", a gospel. Luther, in his explanation of the word gospel, says: "It is a good cry. As there came a good and a consolatory cry among the Israelites when David killed Goliath, so is the gospel a good cry sounding into the whole world, about Jesus Christ, the right David who has killed sin, death and devil!" While we were enemies we were reconciled unto God! In Him the Son,

the enmity is conquered, in Him we are free from all the powers of sin, death and devil. And the New Testament says unmistakably: "In Him alone!" He is therefore the only place in the whole universe where man should seek reconciliation. Living from these realities in Jesus Christ, living from that what He is and He has done, that would be a Christian Life.

1. The first characteristic of such Christian Life, which we would like to mention here, is that what the New Testament calls; *To be in Christ!* This denotes that the masterless sinner finds again his Master, his God, His Kyrios, his Lord. In Jesus Christ God takes hold of man, who is a rebel against God. And He takes hold of the *whole* man, soul, spirit *and* body. To be in Christ is therefore better not explained as "mystical union". "Mystical" denotes too much unrealistic, far from everyday's life, referring to the better, inner "I" only. But to be in Christ means altogether a life where will, reason, heart and e. g. also the sexuality finds its Master. As somebody said: that Christian life would mean, that Christ would also be the Master of the life between husband and wife. In short: Christian life would mean a life of order and discipline. But a discipline that spells

liberty and not legalism, not humanism, but true humanity. Luther has also found here the classic definition: A Christian is a free master of all things and nobody's subject, and a Christian is an assiduous servant of all things and subject to everybody.

2. With this we are coming to the second characteristic: Christian life is a life of *service*. We are free men if we are bound to Christ. He binds us to Himself by taking us into His service. The satanic bondage of individualism is broken, by Jesus only. Separation from God spells separation from the fellowmen. But a life in the realities of Reconciliation is a life of service towards the neighbour. In Christ there is no place for an abstract love.

Because in this way Reconciliation means that man finds in Jesus Christ again God, the Father as the Lord and Master of human life, therefore not only Reconciliation but also the Christian life is the work of the triune God.

But is there not an unbridgeable distance between Christ and us? Yes, there is e. g. a gulf of time, a gulf of history which no one of us can close. But this distance between man and Christ was also in the time of Jesus. So Jesus becomes the revealer of God in the

same way to-day as in His time or in the time of the apostles, namely through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes us contemporary to Christ as Kierkegaard says. So we ask now:

III

*What does it mean for our Christian Life
that the Reconciliation is the Work of
God the Holy Spirit?*

The New Testament witnesses with full clearness: No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit (1. Cor. 12. 3). Many have seen the wonder of the raising of Lazarus, but some only believed on Him and some went their ways to the Pharisees.

This denotes clearly that man cannot open himself unto the redemptive work of God the Father and God the Son. For we remain the obstinate enemies of God until God Himself opens our heart. The question whether man is active or passive in the acceptance of salvation is answered in this way, that man is made active. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The Spirit is the vivifier. But if it is said "Spirit", it never means human spirit, it means always Holy Spirit, God's Spirit, Christ's Spirit. Therefore

the dogma of Trinity confesses: I believe in God the Holy Spirit, the Lord. And the dogma wants to witness nothing else than the New Testament witnesses: The presence of God Himself, the presence of God in Christ, the presence of the Father in His Son and still more the presence of God the Father and God the Son—in *man*! This divine possibility is the wonder of the Holy Spirit. And only because there is God the Holy Spirit, there is the Ministry of Reconciliation. The beseeching and all the admonishing of Paul: be ye reconciled, is nothing but an earnest reckoning with the reality of God the Holy Spirit; a reckoning with the presence of God the Father and God the Son in *man*. Without this reality Paul would have been a phantast. But he knows God Himself is working out the Reconciliation *in us*! What else does it then mean than that we are made free, to give up our enmity against God, that our heart which is closed upwards to God and opened downwards to the powers of sin, death and devil is opened now by God Himself towards God. Not on condition of a human act, but through God Himself, through the Holy Spirit. This divine possibility of Reconciliation is also the possibility, the only possibility of

Christian Life. And we add here, the Christian life is this divine possibility at the beginning in the middle and at the end. This, Calvin has classically described. He starts the third book of his institutes, where he speaks about the acceptance of salvation in Christ, with a chapter titled: "Insertion into Christ through the Holy Spirit". Being inserted, being planted into Christ, that is the work of God the Holy Spirit, that is Reconciliation, that is Christian Life. Here is Justification and Sanctification the work of one and the same God; the work of the triune God.

Such Christian Life will have three more characteristics :

1. Christian Life will be a life of *Obedience of Faith*. Sin is unbelief and therefore disobedience, flight from God. In the redemptive work God meets man on his flight and brings man again to a hearing of God's own word. This hearing (akouein) creates (hypakouein) obeying. In this obedience the sinner fleeing from God is again brought back to God, his Creator. In this life of the reconciled we shall now always hear the ring of obedience. But this obedience is not outward, blind obedience, where simply is done what is asked. Obedience is here qualified by faith; that means the sinner trusts here

that it is the eternal love which calls here to obey.

2. Christian Life, as the work of the Reconciling God will always be characterised by the category of *Sacrifice*. Outside Christ the sufferings and cruelty of human life have a demoniac power. If one is inserted in Christ, sufferings mean communion, fellowship with Christ, to be made conformable unto His death. Here it happens what Paul is asking (Rom. 12. 1): I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable-worship; we can also translate here: true adoration. Sacrifice is here really only adoration without an expectation of reward. The reward is that one is honoured to be the sacrifice for his Lord. This brings us to the last:

3. Christian Life is a life of *Prayer*. Prayer cannot be learned. Prayer is not a skill of the human soul which can be developed, as singing or reciting. Prayer in the sense of the New Testament can only be done *in the Spirit*! This is the redemptive work of God, the Holy Spirit in us, that we turn ourselves entirely towards God and understand, that the only sacrifice we can do is, that we hand over our-

selves to God unto life or death. In prayer, where God the Holy Spirit is at work all self-reflection ceaseth. Man becomes aware of his rebellion against God; he stands far off; he does not dare to lift up his eyes. God be merciful to me a sinner! I believe O Lord, take away my unbelief! He knows not what he should pray! Here, in such prayer is the Holy Spirit at work! The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us! Such prayer where we seek nothing in us because we seek all in God, has the promise to be prayed in the name of Jesus Christ, to be a prayer that is heard. Also prayer is therefore not a possibility of man, but the divine possibility of God the Holy Spirit.

Christian Life must be a life of prayer, because only through the redemptive work of God, the Holy Spirit, our enmity is broken and we are made able to see ourselves as we really are. In prayer only we receive full sincerity. Here where we meet God, here only we can receive the courage to put our lives in order. Here, in the prayer, as the work of the Holy Spirit we receive the courage to confess our sins, to our brother.

And it is again in prayer, as the possibility of God the Holy Spirit, that God speaks with us, awakens our conscience and gives us His

guidance. As one of my teachers said once :
The Prayer is the little room where our God
gives us the order of the day. We have not yet
said everything about prayer. But we close here.
He who has ears will hear.

It would be right to close the whole essay
here; but I feel it necessary to add one warning.
All the characteristics of Christian life, which
we gave in the three portions of our essay have
not to be understood as conditions, on the
ground of which Reconciliation and Christian
life can come into existence. We do not need
these characteristics first. What we need first
always is a reconciler. God the Father, God
the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. If the triune
God is our reconciler He is also the Lord of
our life. Then it becomes true: Not I, but
Christ liveth in me! He, and He alone has the
right and the power to erect those characteris-
tics as signs and signals in the midst of this
world which is at war with God and yet—
reconciled! That is the worst enmity against
God, if man himself wants to erect those
characteristics. What we need is that prayer
from the depth, which was the prayer of the
old, old Church:

Come Holy Spirit!

JUSTIFICATION

by Faith and Cure of Soul

It is not our intention to unfold the manifold problems, which a pastor, evangelist or missionary has to face in that sphere of work which we call: Cure of souls. But we shall try to show the inner relation between that great wonder of Justification witnessed in the Bible and that office in the church, without which a church can not exist.

We keep in mind that in a church where the universal priesthood of the believers is put into practice, there are more "soul-carers" than pastors. And yet we emphasize that even in such a living church also the pastors, evangelists and missionaries are expected to be soul-carers in a special sense. Soul-caring is

* This essay was read at a retreat of Pastors and Evangelists at Udipi, in August 1936.

for them all the one charge of their office. But are we, the pastors, evangelists and missionaries really soul-carers? We all are in some way or other: teachers, lawyers, psychologists, homoeopathic allopathic and other doctors, linguists, some also farmers, we all should be theologians, but—are we soul-carers? Is perhaps the crisis in which many of the churches of this country stand, naked in their fruitlessness, due to the fact that there is no soul-carer and no true cure of souls? Are they not “scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd”? Or if one cannot accept this view, is it not perhaps true that such cure of souls as is still done in our missions and churches is in some way poisoned and thereby made ineffective? Whether we agree to this or not, one thing is certain that a church cannot live without true cure of souls. If our work in mission and church is no more characterised as “cure of souls” then our sermons on the pulpit and in the bazar become religious lectures, the bible-classes a teaching in the history of morality, the catechisations and confirmation-classes a sentimental-intellectual drill, the theological teaching a fruitless philosophy of religion, the administration of the sacraments a magic cult, church-

discipline an inflicting of punishments and the presbytery a court of law, the body of the church a democratic machinery with its consequences: election campaign, party policy etc. The satanic perversion of cure of soul is: diplomacy. This spiritual law a Church can only neglect at the risk of her own existence.

What is then the one remedy for all these diseases which we find at all times in every church? Here is now only one answer:

The Wonder of Justification.

Our first thesis therefore is:

The wonder of Justification creates the true soul-carer.

We are developing this thesis by giving a short application of the fourth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans.

1. We make a *first* important exegetical remark. This remark is: *According to the witnesses of the Bible the Subject of Justification, that is, He who justifies, is always the same, namely God! God in Christ through the Holy Spirit! This is the biblical trinity! As God in Christ through the Holy Spirit is the only Justifier, so also He is finally the only "soul-carer". Because God cares for us, therefore*

there is a possibility that man can become a "soul-carer". In Justification only we become aware that in spite of all our sins, God cares for us. The wonder of God's "cure of souls" is the wonder of Justification. Man can only become a "soul-carer" if he has his standing in God's "cure of souls", if he lives daily in the wondrous reality of Justification, which is until eternity exclusively the work of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Man can only become a "soul-carer" in a figurative sense. Man is only a true "soul-carer" if it happens that through the human service man is brought into God's "cure of souls". Man becomes only a true "soul-carer" if the wonder happens that man becomes "the mouth of God"—as Luther used to say—proclaiming God's own word of Justification.

All true "cure of souls" is therefore concerned with God and God's "cure of souls". It is therefore, that for a true "cure of souls" it is not so important what the "soul-carer" *has*, but what he *is*. It is therefore, that very often not those who have a good knowledge of psychology or even theology who are true "soul-carers". All that we have, gets the quality of usefulness only through what we *are*. Man

can only become a true "soul-carer", if he is in God's "cure of souls", if he is what he is, through God's justifying Grace. "*Being justified*" says Paul repeatedly. "Being justified we have the access to God!"

Because God is God, therefore He is the Justifier and the only "soul-carer". Only if man is justified, is daily in God's "cure of souls", man can become God's fellow-labourer, a true "soul-carer", one who leads others into God's "cure of souls" into God's wonder of Justification.

2. We are making a second exegetical remark. Justification is always *Justification of the godless* (Rom. 4, 5). Paul says, because Abraham trusted, God would justify the ungodly, therefore his faith was reckoned unto righteousness. We can be sure that Paul, saying so, has not forgotten the heroic faith of Abraham, that he was even ready to sacrifice his son, Paul has not forgotten Abraham's highly praised *bhakti*, and all the righteous deeds. And yet Paul says: Abraham was not saved *because of* his faith, because of his "bhakti", because of his righteous deeds, *but through* that faith which trusts, that God justifieth the ungodly. Such faith is found in Abraham because he was

one standing in God's cure of souls. Therefore Abraham is as such also the prototype of all human "soul-carers". If one comes to have his standing in God's cure of souls, he comes to know that he stands before the un-bribeable, incorruptible Holy God, who cannot be deceived. Before Him there is only one question that matters. This question is not "What do you have?" "What have you done?" But: "What *are* you?" God in His cure of souls makes man first realize what man *is*! The biblical answer has been always one: the ungodly, the godless, the rebel, the sinner. But now soul-caring does not consist in man falling upon his fellow-man and saying with a more or less loud voice: Thou art ungodly, a godless, a sinner, a rebel against God. If we do so, we would always become tactless hypocrites but never "soul-carers". No, the presupposition of true "soul-caring" is that the "soul-carer" *himself* has become aware before the holy God, of what *he* himself is, and that means that the true "soul-carer" also in the act of the "cure of souls" knows himself before God as the godless one. So the true "soul-carer" is not doing his work as one who is superior, but as one who knows better than others his own ungodliness,

who knows better than others the wrath of God.

Only in this situation before the incorruptible, un-bribeable God, the human soul-carer can get that power of insight, that incorruptibility, which he also needs in his work of soul-caring. As the justification of the godless denotes that before God all masks fall from every man's face and one sees himself as he is, so also true soul-caring can only happen where diplomacy disappears, because diplomacy denotes hiding the real situation. In true soul-caring the opposite happens, the true situation comes to the light.

We can therefore say that true soul-caring has for its presupposition the reality of man's sin and God's wrath. True soul caring means that these realities come to stand before man as realities of his own life. This does not mean that the human soul-carer has to create, or try to create a consciousness of sin. That only God in Christ through the Holy Spirit can do and the human soul-carer knows *God is doing it*. But what the soul-carer sometimes has to do is what happens again and again in the wound-dressing-room of a hospital: he has to remove those bandages which man is dressing round

his wounds of sin. A true soul-carer will therefore tell a drunkard who wants to be cured from the habit of drinking, that his drinking is only a symptom of the other sin which lies behind all sins and all slavery of sin: the sin against God, the rebellion against God, the disobedience of the first commandment. When in this way all possibilities of a self-made-man have fallen then there is true cure of souls, because there arises the second possibility, of the godless entering God's cure of souls, because God justifies the godless only, the hopeless who hands himself over into the hands of God unto life or death.

Because God justifies the godless, therefore there is also the duty of the soul-carer to pronounce absolution, the forgiveness of sin, the promise of God's Grace. But, when is a soul-carer entitled to do so? Here is no rule. The human soul-carer has to listen here to the divine soul-carer, then only he is doing it in God's name.

In this sense true soul-caring is what Luther called: "magnifying the sin"! "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. 5, 20.)

3. We are making a third exegetical remark: Paul witnesses again and again that

Justification is: *Justification of Uncircumcision and apart from the Law.* (Rom. 4, 10; 4, 13.)

This statement contains two strict negations. As a summary of the first negation, namely: Justification of uncircumcision, we can say: it is denied here that God's act of justification could be bound in anyway with an outward religious *dignity* of man. Baptism, consecration, and ordination cannot make us true soul-carers. With all these, God is not bound to us. If we rest on these as outward guarantees, we are no more living in the reality of justification, we are no more in God's cure of souls. This may warn us against seeking still after other means which could add to our dignity. It is among all of us one temptation very strong in these days: the desire for power, authority, and dignity. But let us hear the warning of our Lord: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you". Do we then deny that a soul-carer should have dignity? Do we think little of baptism, consecration and ordination? God forbid! Without dignity one cannot be soul-carer. In baptism God has given us His promise that He has undertaken to be our shepherd and soul-carer. In consecration and ordination we

have been ordered that our only care should be to become true soul-carers.

We badly need dignity, but this dignity necessary for every soul-carer lies not in the sphere of outward power and authority, this dignity God only can give, if we have our stand in His cure of souls, if we trust exclusively in justification of uncircumcision, if we expect everything from God's free grace only. Then baptism, consecration and ordination are the seals of our invisible dignity, that dignity which no enemy can destroy, because God has given it and gives always anew.

The summary of the second negation—that justification is apart from the law—is the strict denial of the delusion that man could know what he had to do in order to become just, in order to become a true soul-carer. Man *is* never just, he can only become justified. Man *is* never a soul-carer, he can only *be made* a soul-carer. There is no human mediator between God and man. God Himself is in Christ through the Holy Spirit the one mediator, the true "Guru". We are now not so much in danger of erecting the Mosaic law as a wall between God and those who approach us as their soul-carers. But there is the danger that

we perhaps put ourselves between the confessing soul and God. We make absolute our experience and we think we know the conditions which the penitent has to fulfil in order to receive God's grace. We bind the penitents to us. We erect our own law. The result is that in spite of all religious experience of the penitent and the confessor, the wrath of God remains upon both. Because the law worketh wrath. Justification is apart from any law, therefore cure of souls can never be put into a system. A true soul-carer must take each case as a fresh one which does not come again. In soul-caring it is of little importance to know that man *has* a soul, but that he *is* a soul. God has with each soul His own history. The human soul-carer must under the guidance of the divine soul-carer understand God's history with each soul. This denotes a grim fight against every kind of routine and legalization of ones own experience. Routine is the end of cure of souls. It is not the quantity, but the quality that makes it.

The fact that justification is of uncircumcision and apart from the law denotes that the soul-carer has to enter upon a definite fight against himself, so that there can be room for God to

take both the penitent and the confessor into His cure of souls.

4. We are making a fourth exegetical remark: According to the witness of St. Paul *Justification denotes the wonder of the resurrection of the dead*. This means that one standing in God's cure of souls, comes to know the power of resurrection. But this has a presupposition, namely: death. This we have to consider if we want to become true soul-carers. All human optimism has to be buried. A true soul-carer is again and again led to that situation where all around all human lights are extinguished. "Then Abraham fell upon his face and laughed and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old and Sarah, that is ninety years old?" This same Abraham "was fully persuaded that what God had promised, he was able also to perform". Abraham believed God, "Who quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were". "It is a dangerous thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" It is not only dangerous, but one has also to die. Look to Jesus, Paul, Luther, Calvin. None of them had an easy life. None of them could say: I have no enemies. Their lives stood under

the great word of Paul: "I die daily!" Here lies the one problem of every true soul-carer. Here the path is really very narrow. And yet it is the only path of justification, the only path that leads into God's cure of souls. It is impossible for man to enter into this path, but all is possible for God. It would be impossible for all of us had not one gone before: Jesus Christ! "He was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification". So let us be clear that without a risen Lord, soul-caring is impossible.

But wherever one enters the narrow gate of being buried with Jesus, there will be the understanding for the power of Christ's resurrection and he will hope against hope with that hope that maketh not ashamed.

If it is true that the wonder of Justification is creating the true soul-carer, the second thesis is evident: *True soul-caring is done in the expectation of the wonder of Justification.*

1. With this we emphasize once more what we already said: that what had to happen in true soul-caring is never the result of a human undertaking. "We are saved by God's Grace". "The wind bloweth where it listeth". It is God's work in Christ through the Holy

Spirit. "It is the spirit that quickeneth." We belong perhaps to those who strongly feel the one great need of God's Holy spirit. It is also possible that we pray faithfully for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But do we know wherefrom only this Spirit is coming? Ephesians 1, 13 is the right answer: *When ye heard the word of truth*, the Gospel of your salvation, when ye also believed in Him, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise!" Or as Luther classically says: "As the sword is put in the sheath, so the Spirit is put in the word!" This word we have in the whole Bible; this word we have in the New Testament. Therefore if the wonder of Justification, the wonder of true soul-caring has to happen we must live *from* that word, we must live *in* that word, we must live *under* that word. As much as we seek the Holy Spirit let us so much read this word and knock at the closed door until it opens itself. Hereby let us remember that it is the manner of the Pharisees and Scribes to say: We know the scriptures. We are surely entirely in the hands of Satan, if we believe we *do* know the word of God. If we have become self-satisfied in this respect, then the wonder of Justification will no more happen, we are no more in God's

cure of souls. It is an act of care for our own souls and for those who are entrusted to us, not to stop reading and studying the Greek New Testament after leaving the Theological Seminary or College. Here let us humble ourselves and fight against our lazy flesh. Let us remember, that we deceive the sheep of the good shepherd if we do not lead them to the living water. Because we ought to be the servants of the word of God, therefore we have to revise the Greek vocabulary! If we were once convinced that it was our duty to prepare every sermon on the basis of a careful exegesis we could no more say we know the scriptures, we could no more enter the pulpit so easily. We also would have less time for church-policy. We are forced to listen to each word first. We have really to go with our thoughts along each word as a little child goes step by step along a railing. That would then also influence and purify our prayer-life; we would learn then to pray in line with the word of God and not in a babbling manner and in accordance with our own imaginations and intuitions. It would not be too difficult to prove how the neglect of exegesis can cause a ban in church and mission. Let us here work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

Our soul-caring is nothing else than explaining the word of God to the congregation and to the individual. How can we do this without listening carefully to the word first in the adoring expectation, that the word should become the word of our own Justification. What are all the other problems of our church and mission against this one problem? A nothingness! This is true soul-caring to read and explain the Bible in the expectation of the great wonder of the Justification of the godless. This is the first condition for a soul-carer, that he can speak to man because God has first spoken to him.

2. All our work as pastors, evangelists and missionaries must come under the rule of God's word of Justification. To become a soul-carer means therefore that we are doing all the little duties as those who stand in God's cure of souls. This is not emphasizing the importance of individual work. But we want to point out how important it is that our usual pastoral activities become again and again a matter of true soul-caring. There is a great danger that we regard only the so called "individual work" as soul-caring. We hastily try to finish those pastoral functions, such as bap-

tisms, blessing of marriages, burials and cases of church-discipline, in order to become free for individual work, which we exclusively regard as real soul-caring. Against this very dangerous misunderstanding we have to emphasize that those usual pastoral functions must first of all be understood as occasions where we should become soul-carers. This means that we are expected to do those functions in the expectation that God takes both the minister and the members of the congregation into his cure of souls.

It has nothing to do with soul-caring if we simply baptize children without coming in touch with the parents or the guardians. How essential is it especially in mission-churches to show the parents why we baptize the children, how God promises the child and the parents to be their soul-carer. Here let us do that individual work and fight against the magical understanding of this sacrament by leading the guardians or the parents into God's cure of souls.

And what about the marriages which we bless? Do we become the soul-carers of the bride and the bridegroom? Are we able to show them in private talks that the wonder of Justification is the only guarantee of faithful and

happy married-life; that it is necessary that both should have their standing in God's cure of souls in order to be able to realize Christian married-life? What are the contents of our wedding sermons? Are we simply garlanding them with our nice religious words, where we should proclaim the wonder of God's justifying Grace?

Likewise, if death occurs in a family the case is not settled if we have carried out the burial ceremony. Are not the lamentations mostly a speaking symptom, that we were not able to bring the mourners into God's cure of souls?

But the most destructive work is done if church-discipline is not made a matter of soul-caring. It is very decisive that the presbyters should be conscious that they also live by God's justifying Grace only; that they do not attempt to build a church of the righteous but of justified sinners; that it is not their business to inflict punishments, but to proclaim the Justification of the godless.

All our individual work will go astray, if we fail to become true soul-carers in our ordinary daily work. Here we have to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. But

one thing is needful, that the wonder of Justification makes us true soul-carers, who do the daily little duties in the expectation of the wonder, that God takes us into His cure of souls.

